

**WASHINGTON STATE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
MEETING OF
December 17, 2004**

**Conference Call
Olympia, WA**

Minutes

ATTENDANCE

Commissioners: Ellis Casson, Chair Pro Tem; Dallas Barnes, and Ben Cabildo. A quorum was present.

Staff: Marc Brenman, Executive Director; Tanya Calahan, Executive Assistant to the Commissioners; Regina Hook, Operations Manager; Renee Knight, Administrative Services Manager; Idolina Reta, Special Assistant to the Director; and Traci Friedl, Assistant Attorney General.

OPENING AND WELCOME

(Audio tape one – side one)

Commissioner Casson called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Barnes made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2004 Commission meeting. Commissioner Cabildo seconded the motion. MOTION CARRIED.

CASE CLOSURES

The Commissioners discussed various cases on the case list for approval. Commissioner Barnes asked about the “no reasonable cause” finding for Sam Harvey v. WA State Department of Labor & Industries. There was extensive discussion about the case.

Commissioner Barnes asked about Derrington v. Frankfurter USA. He expressed concern that she filed based on creed but there’s not much discussion about her creed in

the finding. Staff will be clearer in the future. More language will be added in the allegation section to clarify the recommended finding in this case.

Commissioner Cabildo commented about the “no reasonable cause” finding for Menefee v. Highland Dementia Care. Staff should correct the noted year in finding of fact number six (6) and number nine (9), which should read “2003.”

Commissioner Barnes made a motion to approve the case closures with the noted amendments. Commissioner Cabildo seconded the motion. MOTION CARRIED.

The Commissioners considered the conciliation failure for McCalib v. SW Suburban Sewer District. Commissioner Barnes made a motion to authorize staff to transmit the case to the Attorney General’s office for further action. Commissioner Cabildo seconded the motion. MOTION CARRIED.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Marc Brenman highlighted various areas of his monthly written Executive Director’s Report.

Special Assistant Idolina Reta spoke about workgroup comments from the December 1-3, 2004 statewide civil rights conference. She spoke about the participants’ request to keep the plan alive.

Staff will get information to the outgoing governor and new governor regarding outcome of the civil rights conference.

Marc Brenman commented about initiatives to deal with case productivity issues. There are many pending aging cases. He will assign operations managers the task of developing a plan to complete these aging cases. He spoke about alternative dispute resolution and case triage.

There will be an all hands meeting on January 11, 2005 to discuss productivity issues.

Mr. Brenman then spoke about realigning staff to address housing discrimination cases. He is considering putting Berneta Walraven in charge of a housing unit which will require someone else to supervise the Seattle staff if Ms. Walraven leads a housing team. This will require shifting staff.

Mr. Brenman commented that the agency will probably need three more investigators to work on housing cases. That would mean a total of six people working just on housing cases.

He commented about selecting a Equal Opportunity Compliance Specialist for the Olympia office. Operations Manager Regina Hook would like to appoint Susan Ramsauer to fill the position.

He next spoke about the agency's budget. The Commission will get an overall 5.1% increase in the Governor's budget. The legislature would have to approve it. The governor elect may change the budget submittal.

(Audio tape one – side two)

Commissioner Barnes requested statistics for onsite case investigations. He wants to know how many cases are telephone and how many are onsite. Mr. Brenman commented that onsite visits cost money in per diem, mileage, etc.

Commissioner Cabildo commented about dealing with immigrants who may not be articulate over the phone if language access is minimized. Onsite visits may be necessary in those instances.

Commissioner Casson requested that the Commissioners discuss onsite visits at the January 2005 Commission meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Barnes asked about several aging cases that changed investigators several times. Staff will provide Commissioner Barnes information why the cases were transferred and why some are aging cases.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tanya Y. Calahan
Executive Assistant to the Commissioners

ACTION ITEMS
DECEMBER 17, 2004 COMMISSION MEETING

1. **Item:** Make corrections to the Derrington v. Frankfurter and Menefee v. The Highlands Dementia Care “no reasonable cause” findings.

Status: Staff made the necessary corrections to the findings.
2. **Item:** Provide Commissioner Barnes.

Status: Staff provided the requested information on December 23, 2004.
3. **Item:** Place a discussion on the January 2005 Commission meeting agenda to address the Commissioners Barnes and Cabildo’s request for more onsite visits when cases are investigated.

Status: Because the January 28, 2005 meeting agenda is full, this item will be discussed at a future Commission meeting if time doesn’t permit discussion on January 28, 2005.
4. **Item:** Discuss the issue of office space for the Spokane District Office.

Status: This item will be discussed at a future Commission meeting.